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ABSTRACT

In 1932, Myles Horton founded the Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee. Horton created an adult education center dedicated to helping groups of primarily poor and uneducated people strive together to solve their social, economic, and political problems and conflicts by mining their own experiences and awareness. In this book, Horton traces the story of his life and the formation of his ideas and tells the story of Highlander against the backdrop of American social history of the last 60 years. Myles Horton came from a rural, religious, working-class background; loved reading from an early age; attended Cumberland University (Tennessee), Union Theological Seminary (New York), and the University of Chicago; then visited Danish folk schools to learn about their contributions to economic and social democracy in Denmark. Originally modeled on the Danish folk schools, Highlander was begun to train labor leaders in the South. Its activities included a community program, intensive residential courses, weekend conferences, and cultural activities. Since Highlander was one of the few places in the South where Blacks and Whites could mingle openly, it later became an organizing center for the Civil Rights Movement. The book outlines Highlander's principles and Horton's insights as a school administrator on promoting social change: the importance of trusting people with democracy, empowerment through participative decision making, nonviolence, the power of social movements, flexibility in change strategies, and commitment to the "long haul." Includes an index and photographs. (SV)

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